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# INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OF HIS EXCELLENCY

**J. C. W. Beckham,**

AND

**MESSAGE**

TO THE

**General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.**



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## INAUGURAL ADDRESS

.. OF ..

GOVERNOR J. C. W. BECKHAM,

DELIVERED DECEMBER 8, 1903.

Before this magnificent gathering of representative Kentuckians, I take to-day for the third time the oath of office as Governor of this great Commonwealth. With uplifted hand, with a heart profoundly touched by the immense responsibilities of the occasion, and with an unshaken faith in the beneficent providence of a merciful God, I again give promise to the people of my native State, that for the next four years I shall see, so far as it is in the power of the chief executive, that your laws are faithfully and honestly enforced. Habit has not decreased my reverence for the sanctity of this oath, for, if possible, I feel more than ever its gravity and importance, and I fully realize that I owe to the good and generous people who have so honored and trusted me, a greater obligation than ever before. The satisfactory fulfillment of this obligation is the only ambition before me. That four years from now I may transfer to a successor this high office, with our State peaceful and prosperous, with its people happy and contented, is the earnest prayer which to-day goes up to heaven from my grateful heart. My debt to you is far more than I can ever repay; my gratitude far deeper than I can ever express. It is the proudest moment of my life—not because you have chosen me to be your governor for the ensuing term, but because the people of Kentucky, whom I love and for whom I have labored with all the energy of my mind and body during the most critical period in our history, have expressed their approval of my conduct as a public official in the past. My pride is not exalted with the prospect of continued power, but my soul is filled with emotions that I may deserve this cherished evidence of your confidence and esteem. You have honored me be-

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fore, it may be far beyond my merit; you have trusted me for nearly four years with this great office; others worthier of it might have been found, but with a zeal and sincerity of purpose born of a patriotic devotion to my State, I have struggled amid difficulties and dangers which frowned upon me, I have contended with obstacles and opposition which beset me at every point, and all this I have patiently and fearlessly undergone that I might secure from you, not a re-election to this office, but your approval and indorsement of my past official service. I would much prefer to retire to-day from a public career with such an indorsement than to hold the office for a lifetime without it. How shall I discharge this great debt which I owe the people of Kentucky? Not by the distribution of a very limited amount of patronage among a few worthy and favored friends; not by vainly seeking to find an office for every one of that vast multitude of deserving and patriotic citizens who eagerly seek such a position; not by putting aside my regard for the solemnity of the oath which I am about to take, and with an eye shut to justice and propriety, dispense official favors to those who, with their petitions and importunities, daily lay siege to the executive office; not with a false sense of party fealty place a harsh hand upon or turn a deaf ear to all those who politically differ from me, and not with the pomp and ostentation of power, or with the vain and foolish idea that by reason of this distinguished position, I am any better or greater than the people who have so honored me. The intelligent constituency, whose servant I am, expect no such things from me. But I shall try to deserve the confidence you have placed in me by giving the State an honest and faithful administration of its public affairs, and with the aid of those excellent gentlemen elected with me, and who will be associated with me for the next four years, endeavor to govern the State in a manner that will meet with your cordial approbation. It is very gratifying to me, and it is very fortunate for you, that you have elected along with me such honorable and capable men as your State officials who, I am confident, will heartily co-operate with me in the effort to give you a most successful and creditable administration. In perfect harmony and accord, we shall work together, diligently and eagerly striving to reward you for the honored trust you have confided to us. While we are the representatives and agents of a great political party, which has



recently asserted, with unmistakable emphasis, its overwhelming predominance in Kentucky, and while we are loyal and true to the principles and organization of that party, we shall conduct your affairs of state, not upon narrow and partisan lines, but upon those broad and liberal policies which commend themselves to the approval of all patriotic citizens. The Democratic party, to which we owe our allegiance and whose servants we are, expects us and commands us that we carry into effect its principles and instructions by an honest and economical conduct of the public business; by a rigid and impartial enforcement of the laws; by a careful, prudent and wise management of the public institutions; by a watchful and fearless policy in seeing, so far as the power in us lies, that life, liberty and property are as safe and well protected in Kentucky as anywhere else on earth, thus giving the lie to those who, for various and sordid motives, slander the name of this great Commonwealth and villify its splendid citizenship; and by doing everything in our power to improve our common school system, to build up the cause of education, and place it in easier reach of the poor, by permitting them, under proper legislation, to purchase their school books as cheaply here as the same books can be purchased in other States where such legislation has been enacted. This party further directs us, as its instruments of power, that malice and vindictiveness shall have no part in our official actions and that party fidelity is not shown by political persecution of the opposition; that we shall endeavor to remove all bitterness and ill-feeling from among our people, and that our purpose shall be to establish perfect peace and tranquillity throughout the State; that in discharging our public duties, we shall discriminate against no section of the State, make no distinction among classes, treat the rich and the poor alike, recognize the rights and proper relations of both capital and labor, and with scales evenly balanced be just and fair to all; that in every reasonable and possible way we shall lend aid and encouragement to the industrial and commercial development of Kentucky, to invite the investment of capital for the purpose of unlocking the vast natural resources with which the State is so richly blessed, and to make for our people a brilliant epoch in the material progress of the age; and that in all things we shall be true to that manly spirit and patriotic pride which thrill the heart of

every genuine Kentuckian who loves his State, is proud of its history and its heroes, is ambitious to see it grow and prosper, and who stands ready with matchless courage and with unflagging strength to defend its honor and its fame against all who may assail it. Should we, in whole or in reasonable part, fulfill these directions given us by our party, then we hope to deserve the generous confidence shown in us so emphatically on the third of November.

This event typifies the beauty and strength of our form of government. It shows that those who administer your laws and rule over you are your servants and not your masters, and that they owe their positions not to any divine right or hereditary fortune, but to the choice and suffrage of the people. They must render a strict account of their service to you, and if errors have been committed or your trust abused, then the power is in you to rebuke and to make necessary changes. The day is at hand when public officials should be more vigilant and active than ever before, in watching and guarding the interests of the people, for while the trusts and the great combinations of corporate wealth have all the legal and skillful talent that wealth can buy to further increase their privileges and powers, the people themselves have neither attorneys nor lobbyists, and must place complete reliance for the protection of their interests upon the fidelity, honesty and capacity of those who have been elected to office. Sleepless and alert they should be in meeting so great a responsibility. Indifference or temptation should not mislead, and a trusting and confiding constituency is entitled to the best services and abilities of its public officials. I speak not only for myself, but I am sure I also voice the sentiment of all those gentlemen who are to be my official associates during this term, when I say that we shall devote our entire time and energies in the performance of our duties and in jealously guarding the welfare and rights of the people.

It is not expected or desired that I should on this occasion outline in detail the policies which shall be pursued by this administration, nor is it a matter of speculation on your part as to what my course in office shall be. If I was taking this oath for the first time, and you had never tried me before, then it would be right and proper that I should speak more definitely and more at length



upon these matters. But for three years and ten months I have held this office, and you have had sufficient opportunity to become familiar with my character and conduct as an official. By that guide, you can better determine than in any other way what my actions will be in the future. I can not be any more honest or faithful in my work than I have been heretofore, but with the added light of a greater and broader experience, I hope to give you a more efficient and successful administration than ever.

This position is one of great responsibilities, and of many serious difficulties. Day after day in his office the governor is urged and begged and implored to grant favors or to do things which, in the conscientious performance of his duties, he has no right to do, and in many instances those who come as friends asking for such things go away as enemies, because in obedience to a sense of right he has refused them. It is not an infrequent occurrence that an intelligent and prominent citizen will ask the executive for a pardon or other official action as a personal favor to him. They forget that he is under the same obligations to conscience and duty as the judge of a court, and that, like a judge, he tries to deal out justice in all cases without fear or favor. No matter how hard and patiently he may try to pass upon all cases according to their merit, he can not fail in many instances to make enemies. His best friends must sometimes be disappointed because he does not comply, and can not properly do so, with their wishes. No matter how pure may be his motives or how upright his conduct, he can not escape calumny and abuse from those who seek to destroy him because they can not control him. His actions and purposes are frequently misrepresented for partisan reasons, or out of personal malice. No slander is too base to be circulated about him, and no falsehood too flagrant to be uttered by some malevolent tongue. Many people who would not dare say aught against the judge on the bench or criticise for a moment the motives of his official conduct do not hesitate to pour an unlimited amount of abuse upon the chief executive of the State and question his sincerity because, perhaps, in some matter he has failed to do what they wanted. Honest and just criticism of him is beneficial and healthful. His public acts should be closely and carefully scrutinized, and he should be held to a strict accountability for all he does, but it is not necessary to fabricate stories or cast un-

just aspersions upon his character, for as long as our governors are human beings, with hearts that beat like other men's and are not infallible by reason of the high positions they hold, no matter how honest and capable they may be, they will occasionally make mistakes, which are sufficient for legitimate and proper criticism. I have not escaped my share of abuse and misrepresentation. For nearly four years I have had the fierce searchlight of a relentless and bitter opposition beating upon me. I have stood in this place during the most turbulent period in our history, while the furious storms of partisan passion and civil discord have raged around me. I have never hesitated for one instant in doing that which I believed to be honorable and to the best interest of my State. Questions of the gravest consequence have been frequently thrust upon me for decision, and I have tried with an honest heart and with what ability I had to meet them intelligently and patriotically, and to settle them in a manner worthy of the great people who had trusted me. But I would be a consummate egotist, unworthy of your regard, and unfitted for this responsible position, if I should stand here to-day and tell you that I have made no mistakes in the past and that I will make none in the next term. I call upon the good people of Kentucky, who have stood by me in the past, during times of trouble and distress, who, by their support and encouragement have given me strength to face the difficulties before me, and I ask them that in the coming term they will uphold me and assist me in the earnest effort I shall make to serve them faithfully and well. You have done much for me, you owe me nothing. I owe you the best public service possible for man to give.

On the night of February 3, 1900, just after the tragic death of my lamented predecessor, Gov. Goebel, I first took this oath as your governor. You remember the awful condition of affairs in the State at that time. I trembled at the great responsibility which fell so suddenly and unexpectedly upon my inexperienced shoulders. But when the last words of that oath had left my lips I called upon God to help me do my duty, and to-day, under far different conditions, with our State tranquil and prosperous, I bow my head in reverence and love before that same God, the Great Ruler of us all, and humbly pray that he will strengthen and aid me to deserve this great honor, and to make me a governor worthy of the best people the sun ever shone upon.



REGULAR MESSAGE  
OF  
GOVERNOR J. C. W. BECKHAM  
TO THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF KENTUCKY,  
JANUARY SESSION, 1904.

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*Gentlemen of the General Assembly:*

In beginning this regular session of your term as members of the legislative branch of the State government, with the limitation of time fixed at sixty days, it is important that you take a prompt and judicious survey of the work before you. The wise restrictions which the framers of our organic law placed upon the manner of legislation have rendered it a slow and tedious process and it is therefore essential that your work be not impeded by unnecessary delays or hampered by unreasonable obstructions. Under the former Constitution it was possible in one day for a bill to be introduced, passed in both houses, signed by the Governor, made a law, and probably not half a dozen members in all had the slightest idea as to what the bill contained. This power was frequently abused and was the source of much mischief and wrong; but the present Constitution has radically reformed the practice, and under the new system every proposed measure of legislation is subjected to the most rigid scrutiny both by the members and by the people. Thorough publicity is given to it and every member is afforded the opportunity of fully considering it before casting his vote. Following the constitutional requirements, it now takes nearly two weeks

for a bill, even under the most favorable auspices, to get through the tortuous track of legislative routine and enactment into law. A very small percentage of all the bills introduced will ever be considered or passed by the two houses, and for that reason I suggest that you quickly winnow the wheat from the chaff, the good from the bad, the necessary from the unnecessary, that your time may be given to such measures as are of practical benefit to the people. The condition of affairs in the Commonwealth is such as to demand very little legislation, and all that is needed can be easily disposed of in the usual length of your session. It is my purpose in this communication to give you a brief review of matters affecting your State government and to make suggestions to you where I believe good may be done or improvements made by action upon your part. With nearly four years' service in the administration of the public institutions and laws, it is possible for me to speak of such things from a standpoint of practical experience without the necessity of indulging in speculative theories and untried experiments. It is hardly possible and not expected that I should enumerate every subject where remedial legislation might be applied, but in a plain and frank manner I shall call your attention to those matters that I think are of importance and give you my views upon them for your consideration. In doing so there is no spirit of arrogance or pride of opinion upon my part, in the vain belief that my theories as to what is best are infallible, but simply in the discharge of a constitutional duty, to seek by an honest and candid exchange of ideas, the accomplishment of those things which will redound to the interest of the State and the welfare of its people. Aided by the wisdom of your deliberations and strengthened with such help as you can give, I believe that the present administration can fully reward the confidence placed in it by the people and put the State in the best position ever known in its history. Upon such common ground we can easily and successfully work together. It is very gratifying to all our people that the condition of affairs throughout the Commonwealth was never better than at present. Peace and contentment exist everywhere; the laws are respected and obeyed; the courts of justice have proven themselves effective in reducing crime and in the administration of law; progress and prosperity can be seen in every section; more capital than ever before is being invested in the development of the State's resources; and our people real-



ize more than ever the brilliant opportunities for advancement and achievement before them.

#### FISCAL AFFAIRS.

The financial condition of the State government is the best it ever enjoyed and is surpassed by that of no other State in the Union. Kentucky to-day is practically out of debt with the largest surplus in the treasury in its history. The public institutions, charitable and educational, need from this General Assembly smaller appropriations than they have required for many years. The bonded debt of the State amounting to \$1,000,000 has all been extinguished in the past year with the exception of \$36,000. This much has not been paid because the persons holding the bonds have evidently been unwilling to part with them before maturity, for we have had plenty of money to buy them and would have done so provided they could be purchased at a reasonable price. This bonded debt consisted of

Five hundred certificates of indebtedness dated June 1, 1885, maturing twenty years after date (1905), of one thousand dollars each, at 4 per cent. per annum.....	\$ 500,000 00
Also five hundred coupon bonds, dated July 1, 1897, of one thousand dollars each, maturing ten years after date (1907), at 4 per cent. per annum .....	\$ 500,000 00

Of these bonds, there are outstanding ten of the 1885 issue and twenty-six of the 1897 issue, making the \$36,000.00 above referred to. We have, therefore, bought up and destroyed in the past year nine hundred and seventy-four bonds (974) of the one thousand (1,000), and we secured them at prices which made it a good investment of the State's money. We would immediately take the remaining thirty-six at the same rates if the owners would part with them.

We were enabled to buy up these bonds before their maturity out of the money collected last spring from the National Government upon some claims due the State arising from interest upon

money furnished the Government by the State during the Civil War. The amount which we collected through our agent on these claims was \$1,323,999.35, and the cost of collection was  $5\frac{3}{8}$  per cent., by far the smallest per cent. paid by any State in the Union in the collection of similar claims. Aside from the addition of this large sum, the condition of our treasury is better than ever before.

In 1897, the tax rate was raised from  $42\frac{1}{2}$  cents to  $52\frac{1}{2}$  cents on the one hundred dollars of property, with a provision in the act raising it, that, at the end of three years, the rate should fall five cents, from  $52\frac{1}{2}$  to  $47\frac{1}{2}$ . This last rate, therefore, became effective in 1900, the year when the last administration took charge. The decrease in the rate made a considerable falling off in our revenues, amounting to over \$350,000.00 a year. We ran upon that decreased rate for two years, and, owing to the extraordinary conditions during that time, and many unusual expenses arising from those conditions, there was some embarrassment felt. The General Assembly of 1902 consequently found it necessary to raise the rate to 50 cents. That is the present rate, but it is now more than sufficient for our expenses, and it is possible for you to reduce it, provided you do not make any large appropriations or increase the annual demands upon the revenue.

There are obligations against the State in the form of educational bonds, which can not properly be charged as a debt, for the interest only can be paid, the principal being irredeemable. This interest is paid out of the Sinking Fund and it is all used for educational purposes. These bonds are as follows:

#### BONDS HELD BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

State bonds, issued January 1, 1870.....	\$1,327,000 00
County bonds, issued January 1, 1885.....	378,946 71
New school bonds, issued March 12, 1892.....	606,650 15
<hr/>	
Total school bonds .....	\$2,312,596 86



Also a bond of the Commonwealth, dated July 1, 1897, for \$165,000, bearing interest at 6 per cent. per annum, payable semi-annually, to the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Kentucky, and the State Normal School for Colored Persons of Kentucky. Said bond is a perpetual obligation of the Commonwealth, issued under act of May 21, 1897..... \$ 165,000 00

Total educational bonds..... \$2,477,596 86

This sum of \$2,477,596.86 represents the entire amount of that part of the States' obligations which are irredeemable and, under the law, can never be paid.

There was a cash balance in the treasury on January 1, 1904; of \$

The report of the State Inspector and Examiner for the month of December, 1903, shows the condition of the finances at the close of business on December 31st.

This excellent showing of the fiscal affairs and the large surplus on hand should not be a temptation to any unnecessary or extravagant expenditures. I advise that the same prudence and economy be used by you as I would advise if conditions were not so favorable. Many demands for money are going to be made upon you; many appropriations asked; probably more than was ever asked of any other General Assembly. Our financial prosperity and treasury surplus have been an invitation to many schemes and plans to get money out of the State. Let me urge you that every proposal to spend the State's money shall receive your most careful investigation, and that not one cent shall be expended unless there is a necessity for it, or some obligation upon the State to do it. There are very few appropriations needed at this time, and yet you will probably be asked for many hundreds of thousand of dollars in cases where nothing should be spent. Our people are the most generous on earth and our Legislatures are usually representative of the people in that respect, but, in dealing with the State's money, we are simply trustees of a trust fund and we have no right to use one dollar of it except where there is a just and legal demand upon the State. The excellent financial

condition now existing should be maintained, and by a prudent and economical course it can be done, making it unnecessary for many years to either increase the tax rate or put the State in debt again.

#### CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS.

The public institutions of the State, both eleemosynary and educational, need less money than usual. The last General Assembly was very liberal in its appropriations to them and they are now in such good condition that they require little if any help. The only urgent necessity for action upon your part towards the insane asylums is to provide some increase in their capacity. For about two years these three institutions have been so crowded that it has been difficult and in many cases impossible to provide accommodations for new patients. Frequently these patients after having been adjudged of unsound mind have been compelled to remain in their county jails for months, waiting until vacancies should arise in one of the asylums. You should therefore do something to relieve this congestion, and it does not require a large amount of money to do so. I am opposed to building another institution of this kind, for it would entail another expensive and unnecessary burden upon the State. I think the difficulty can be met much better and more economically by building additional room to one or more of the present asylums. I suggest that your committees on Charitable Institutions investigate this matter as quickly as possible, so that they can report to you in ample time for you to take some action in it.

The general condition and management of the charitable institutions have never been better than at present, and yet I am more convinced than ever after nearly four years' experience with them that the plan of their management is the most expensive and unreasonable it is possible to devise and I do not believe the like of it can be found in any other State. The State's money is annually wasted in large sums by reason of this defective system. I advised the General Assembly two years ago to change the laws governing these institutions so that the responsibility for their management might be directly located and that better results might be secured. Had it been done I am confident that a great amount of money could have been saved to the State, and an improvement made in every



respect. They should be made State, and not local, institutions, for each Legislature is met with large and extravagant demands from them because of the fact that under the present system they are more local than State concerns, and each locality is rivalling the others in trying to get the most money expended upon its institution. The full amount of the per capita allowance is always used, and none of it ever turned back into the State treasury, when I have no doubt that if they were conducted as State institutions by a State board the present allowance would be far more than enough for the successful conduct of them. The State is too generous in its charities to have its money needlessly wasted, and I therefore urge that you change the existing awkward plan, and place all of these charitable institutions under the control of a State board consisting of three members who shall give their entire time to the management of them. I have no criticism to make of the members of the present local boards, for on those boards are many excellent men interested in the welfare of the institutions; the trouble is not with the men; it is with the system. These boards should be abolished absolutely, for as long as they continue every dollar of the per capita allowance will always be used, and the demands upon the State for additional appropriations will increase. Enough could have been easily saved in the last two years under a State board to build such additions to the asylums as are now needed without calling upon you for an appropriation.

About the only objection that is presented to this change is that it would create several more salaried officials. The same objection was made to the passage of the prison bill in 1898, and yet the three new commissioners by more business-like methods in controlling the prisons saved enough in a single month to pay their salaries for a year. The successful outcome of that change is sufficiently well known to you and does not need further explanation. The creation of a State board of charities would probably make practicable the abolition of several positions in the institutions at present, but the chief advantage would be in the general saving of money by a more rational and sensible administration of them.

The reports of all these various institutions will be laid before you and from them you can get more specific information as to their condition and management for the past two years. The State has three asylums for the insane, located respectively at Lexington,

Lakeland and Hopkinsville; an institution for feeble-minded children, at Frankfort; a blind asylum at Louisville, and a deaf and dumb institute at Danville. The conditions and needs of all these should receive your careful attention and consideration.

#### THE PENITENTIARIES.

The two prisons, one at Frankfort, the other at Eddyville, make a creditable showing of their condition. They used to be, under the former system of management, a large expense to the State and the source of a great deal of trouble. The law was, however, radically changed in 1898, and there has been a marked improvement since then. Instead of being a burden upon us they are now self-supporting and this year they show a net revenue to the State. All of this is accomplished by the hire of the convict labor inside the walls and a double advantage is secured from it—the saving to the State from the wages earned, and also it works much reformation in the lives of the prisoners by keeping them from idleness and teaching them a useful trade, which after their liberation enables them to make a living for themselves.

The sanitary and moral condition of the prisons has been kept at a high average, and the discipline has been all that could be desired. As to the needs of these institutions, the report of the Board of Commissioners and the regular investigation by your prison committees ought to give you sufficient information.

#### HOUSES OF REFORM.

The State reformatory for youthful criminals at Lexington is comparatively in its infancy as a State institution. The purpose for which it was established is most praiseworthy, and it should be carried out as far as possible. Much good is being done by it, and I believe that in the course of time it will become one of the most important institutions of the State. It is now controlled by a board of trustees composed of men and women appointed by the Governor, and while the present board has an excellent membership, I do not consider the plan of managing the concern under the law as wise and successful. I believe you could improve upon it and therefore call your attention to it. The institution probably needs some financial



help from you which you can determine from the report and the investigation of your committees. No money can be better spent than that used to rescue the youthful criminal and make a good citizen out of him. Much complaint has been made of the overcrowded condition of the buildings and the inadequate accommodations for the constantly increasing number of inmates.

#### EDUCATION.

I call your attention especially to the report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the information which it gives upon the subject of educational matters in the State and for the suggestions he makes for improvement. The superintendent has made a very careful study of these questions and I believe his recommendations for legislative action are entitled to your serious and favorable consideration.

The most important feature of this subject is the question of school books and the prices paid for them. Legislation on this matter is demanded by the people and while they have been disappointed several times in the past in regard to it there is every reason to believe that this session of the General Assembly should, without fail, pass a bill fixing maximum prices for school books and establishing a State uniformity in the texts. No valid argument or reasonable objection can be made against this measure. It is not an experiment, for other States have adopted it, and it has been universally satisfactory wherever it has been tried. The proposition is such a plain and simple one, the mere question as to whether or not our school children shall be able to purchase their books about one-third less than they now pay for them, that it is surprising any one should object to it, except those who are interested in the book business and are desirous of getting the highest prices possible for their books. It is unnecessary to recite all the advantages of such a law; the question has been before the people so long; its features and purposes have been so thoroughly discussed; the arguments brought against it have been so completely exposed in their weakness and insincerity; and the fact has been so positively established that we are paying much higher prices for books than are paid for the same books in States where such laws have been passed—all of this has been so well understood that the people have reason

to be a little impatient for action and have a right to expect this General Assembly to fulfill the promises so long made to them and place upon the statute book a law of so much good to the cause of education and to the relief of the poor people of the State. There will be no measure before you for consideration during this session which means as much to the people, which gives them more substantial relief, and which does more for general education than does the proposed law for a uniform system of school books. It is undoubtedly the most popular measure before the people of Kentucky, and wherever an opportunity has been presented to them they have shown unmistakably and emphatically their approval of it. I earnestly hope that this subject shall receive your prompt attention, and that a proper bill carrying out these principles will soon receive your sanction. Other suggestions affecting the improvement of our common school system may be found in the report of the superintendent. Too much can not be done for these schools. A State can not make a better investment of its money than in the education of its children. I therefore recommend that you make some substantial increase in the school fund in order that the length of the school term may be extended from five to six or seven months. Such an extension is justified by the condition of the revenues and may be accomplished by a re-apportionment of the present tax rate without making any addition to the total rate.

Nothing better or more popular could be done by this General Assembly than a reasonable increase in the school term and the passage of a law making school books cheaper.

#### THE STATE COLLEGE.

The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Lexington is making commendable progress in the cause of higher education. It should have every necessary aid and encouragement in its work. Admirably located and well equipped, it is destined in time, with the proper assistance to become the leading educational institution in the South. I suggest that you make a careful investigation of its needs and requirements and as far as consistent with the State's means, do all that is possible for its development and growth.



## THE STATE NORMAL SCHOOL.

The Normal and Industrial Institute for colored people is located near Frankfort and is doing good work for that race. It has been generously aided by the State and is deserving of any additional help it may need. The colored people of Kentucky can solve the so-called race problem for themselves if they can reach the point where their race prejudices can not be stirred up in every political contest, and if they will not allow irresponsible demagogues to teach them that their white neighbors are their enemies rather than their friends. The negroes have never had better friends than the white people of Kentucky have been to them, for although they pay an insignificant portion of the taxes, they have been permitted to share equally in the school funds with the white children of the State.

Along the lines of industrial and useful training they can better their condition, and make themselves worthier of the privileges of citizenship. Many of their most intelligent and thoughtful leaders in the State have begun to realize these facts and are doing much good among them towards a more sensible and practical improvement of the race. These men recognize the impossibility and absurdity of social equality between the races; they see that since the negro was given suffrage, he has been made the dupe of political sharpers and that his passions and race prejudices have been used to his own injury. The work of this school is therefore to be commended and encouraged.

## PAUPER IDIOTS.

I ask that you make a comparison of the tables in the Auditor's reports of the amounts paid by the State each year for the support of pauper idiots, and observe to what an alarming extent this imposition is growing. I say imposition advisedly, for it is nothing less. In no other instance is the generosity of the State more abused than in this. It has grown to be simply a big pauper pension system, and this General Assembly should by all means at least curtail its growth, if not abolish it entirely, and make each county do as it should in taking care of its own poor. From June 30, 1900, to June 1, 1903, this expense increased from \$123,404.65 to \$156,900.50. This great increase in three years should certainly

call forth some legislative remedy. In the first place, this matter ought to be a charge upon the county, and not upon the State, but in the event you do not make so complete a change, then I suggest that you so amend the law that the county shall pay one-half of the allowance before the State shall be forced to pay the other half. This will put a considerable check upon the drain and it is nothing more than fair and reasonable.

#### CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS.

You should also examine the figures in the reports in regard to the costs of criminal prosecutions and see to what an extent these expenses have grown. There is a reckless waste of the State's money in this matter, and something should be done by you to put an end to it. Many times by myself and by some of my predecessors has attention been called to these evils, that the General Assembly might take some action to protect the State against them, but nothing has been done. If you would compel the county to share in some of these expenses, then the county and district officials would not be so careless about incurring them. Proper legislation upon this subject, and the pauper idiot claims would save the State \$150,000.00 or \$200,000.00 per annum, without doing any one an injustice or in the least impairing the public service.

#### NEW CAPITOL BUILDINGS.

You will hear much during this session upon the subject of an appropriation to erect new capitol buildings. In the message to the General Assembly of 1902, I expressed my opinion about it and as that opinion is the same now as it was then, I quote what I said about it:

"It is a fact apparent to all, especially to visitors from other States, who come to your capital, that in the matter of capitol buildings, Kentucky is far behind the other States, even those of much less wealth and population. The unsightly and incongruous buildings which are now used as the capitol are unworthy of the State of Kentucky, as well as inadequate in their accommodations for the public business. The building in which you are now assembled is especially unsuited for the purpose for which it is used,



and is in almost constant need of repairs to make it safe and fit for use at all. The public records and the State library are in constant danger of destruction by reason of the lack of fire-proof arrangements. The General Assembly is provided with no committee rooms or other conveniences so necessary to their comfort and to the proper dispatch of business. It is not only right that the capitol buildings in their appearance should be in keeping with the intelligence and wealth of the State, but, above all, it is important that safer and more commodious offices should be provided for the transaction of the public business. The contest over the location of the capital has for many years prevented the erection of a new capitol building, but, as that question has been virtually settled (it seems for all time) there is no reason for further delay. I believe that there is no doubt now that the capital location is permanently settled in Frankfort. The conflicting claims of rival cities would in the future, as they have in the past, always prevent the removal from here. This is, therefore, the proper time for the General Assembly to make provision for the erection of a new capitol, not an extravagant one, but one that will be a credit to Kentucky and a source of pride to all her citizens."

The State is better able now than then to build a new capitol. I suggest that in any proposed bill for this purpose you see that every possible precaution and safeguard are taken that the State's interest may be protected and not a dollar of the appropriation can be wasted or misused.

#### ST. LOUIS EXPOSITION.

You will also be called upon to make some appropriation to aid the Kentucky exhibit at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis this year. A number of enterprising gentlemen in the State, after the failure of the last General Assembly to appropriate money for this purpose formed an association and raised some funds with which they have made a start for a Kentucky exhibit there. They have not a sufficient amount for the purpose, and therefore ask you to make some appropriation. I think it would be well to do so, provided such an appropriation would not interfere with an increase in the school fund or with the building of a new capitol. All of these matters should be considered together, so that the State's

finances shall not be crippled or its means overreached. I hope, however, that it may be possible for you to give this enterprise some aid, for our State ought to be creditably represented there.

#### THE STATE GUARD.

The militia of the State is probably in better condition than ever before. I refer you to the report of the Adjutant General, that you may see all the details as to its condition and strength. We have two regiments of infantry, with several unassigned companies, one battalion of artillery and a troop of cavalry. There are two objects in view in the establishment of our State guard; the first is to have some military force ready for active service to aid the courts and civil authorities whenever they need such assistance. In this respect our militia is in excellent readiness. During the past administration after the reorganization of the Guard, there never was a request made upon me by any judge or other civil officer for troops that it was not possible for us to furnish them in sufficient force and numbers for the service as promptly and effectively as if they had been regular soldiers. Such is their condition now, and it is in such a state of efficiency that an absolute guaranty is given in every section of the State that there is power sufficient back of the courts to see that the laws are obeyed and enforced. Assurance has been given to the circuit judges of the State that whenever any one of them needs military aid in his district in the administration of the laws, it would be promptly sent. Perfect preparation for such emergencies is the best safeguard against them; and by keeping our militia in such a ready and serviceable condition the necessity for its action is correspondingly diminished. In the use of the military power, I have carefully followed the letter and spirit of our Constitution, where it says: "The military shall in all cases and at all times be in strict subordination to the civil power." The second purpose of the militia is to give our young men some military training, so that in case the country needs the services of its citizen-soldiery, they will not be found unprepared. The building up and strengthening of the National Guard in the country is far better than increasing our regular army. Decided steps have been taken in this direction by a recent act of Congress known as the "Dick Bill," its purpose being to improve and de-



velop the militia of the States with aid from the Federal Government. Kentucky has taken advantage of the provisions of this act, and during the past year I ordered the entire State Guard into the National Encampment held by the Government at West Point, Ky. Some legislation is needed from you to enable us to get the full benefit of this act, and some changes should be made in our military laws so that there shall be proper conformity to the National law.

The excellent character of our State troops was shown by their valuable services in Breathitt county during the past year. The trained veterans of the regular army could not have done better, and their presence there for several months, aiding the courts and civil authorities, has brought about a condition of peace and respect for the law in that county. All soldiers have been withdrawn from there, and I believe that the good people of the county will from now on make it unnecessary for troops to be sent there again.

The conditions there for a while were very unfortunate, though they were grossly exaggerated by sensational journals, among whom it has been quite a fashion to paint a lurid romance out of any tragedy in Kentucky. Our State has been made the sport and prey of these reckless representatives of the "yellow journals" in the North and East. With morbid greed they seize upon every crime committed here and display it in the most extravagant manner, while a similar crime committed elsewhere receives only a passing notice. The effort is made by them to discredit the entire State, and, if possible, create the impression that its people are barely civilized. These slanders should be rebuked wherever possible, and it would be well for you to pass a law holding to penal accountability these irresponsible romancers who send out such misrepresentations and falsehoods. The people of Kentucky are as law-abiding as any on earth; life, liberty and property are as safe and well-protected here as in any other State in the Union. It is not an exaggeration to say that there was not a day during the past year that human life was not safer in Kentucky, even in Breathitt county, than it is any night upon the streets of Chicago or New York, from the sanguinary columns of whose veracious journals the people have been told day after day of "the awful reign of lawlessness and crime in Kentucky." The outcome and settlement of the Breathitt county trouble was a complete vindication of the courts and people of Kentucky, and showed the supremacy of law in this State.

## STATE BOARD OF HEALTH.

I call your attention to the able and valuable report of the State Board of Health, showing as it does the excellent work it has done in the cause of public health. No work is of greater importance to the people than the systematic and successful stamping out of diseases and epidemics, and this Board, whose services are almost entirely voluntary and unrequited, is deserving of encouragement and aid from the State. It has done much to elevate the medical profession of the State and thereby gives the people increased protection from quacks and impostors. I hope you will, wherever possible, increase the efficiency of its work.

In closing this communication to you, permit me to speak briefly of the obligations which I, as the executive, and you, as the legislative, power of the State government, owe to the great people who have chosen us for the time as their public servants, and invested us with the solemn responsibilities of our honored positions. Our debt to them can not be discharged in the mere perfunctory performance of routine work. To-day, more than ever, the most unwearied vigilance and the most patriotic industry are needed upon the part of public officials; upon the honesty and fidelity of them the success and endurance of our republic depend; whenever they become faithless to their trust, whenever they look more to private gain than to the public weal, then indeed must fall to pieces this splendid fabric of a Government which has been known as the "land of the free, the home of the brave."

With its marvelous growth and matchless achievements, in a little over a century springing from infancy to the front of the nations of the earth, we are justly proud of it and boast of its greatness. But let us realize that its future can not be secure, its progress can not continue, and its people can not be happy, unless those charged with the control and conduct of the Government shall be absolutely faithful and incorruptible in the exercise of their authority. How great, therefore, is the duty we owe Kentucky, whose welfare and destiny have been temporarily entrusted to our care; what watchfulness should we give to her interests; what diligence should we devote to her development and prosperity; with what vigor and courage should we meet and overcome those who would despoil her, whether they should come as open enemies or come in



the more polished and dangerous guise of those who seek by official indulgence to engraft themselves, like parasites, upon the body politic; and with what sleeplessness and valor should we stand like sentinels guarding the outposts of her honor and peace. She deserves the best we can do; her noble people are worthy of the consecration to their service of every talent and ability we may have. They have no attorneys or lobbyists to plead their cause, but, with a trusting faith and loyal support, they look to us and ask that we do not forget them, and that we reward the confidence they have placed in us by an honest and conscientious performance of our duties. Let us, therefore, during your session here this winter, look the field over and see what good we may do; see if there are any useful laws we can pass and any bad ones defeat; see if we can by any action of ours make the fires burn more cheerfully in our homes, and the light of intelligence in the faces of our children beam with greater brightness; see, too, if any wrong can be remedied, or any right justly due can be granted, and see, above all things, that these people who have so trusted and honored us shall never have reason to reproach us for a wrong done or a duty unperformed.

I submit this address to you that you may consider such suggestions as it contains, with the earnest hope that whatever you may do while here, the Commonwealth and its people may be greatly benefited by your labors.

Very respectfully,

J. C. W. BECKHAM,

Governor of Kentucky.

January 5, 1904.







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